

WASHINGTON – Congressmen Tim Ryan (OH-17) and Brian Higgins (NY-27) introduced legislation to give federal aid and support to cities experiencing major population loss. The Community Regeneration, Sustainability and Innovation Act (CRSI). [H.R. 790](#) would create a new, competitive program within the U.S. Department of Housing and Community Development (HUD) that targets cities and metropolitan areas experiencing large-scale property vacancy and abandonment due to long-term employment and population losses. The program would make funds available for the demolition of abandoned properties, the innovative reuse of existing structures, the creation of green space and city planning purposes.

**“There are a number of older, industrial cities in my Ohio district that have begun to reinvent themselves – this program will provide the support that they need to continue a successful trajectory,”** said Congressman Tim Ryan. **“These funds will help those cities that have been hardest hit by long-term blight and decay to create healthier, economically competitive, and sustainable neighborhoods.**

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**“Storyed neighborhoods with great character and potential are crushing under the weight of vacant homes that drive blight, crime and economic deterioration,”** said Congressman Brian Higgins.

**“By supporting removal or creative reuse of vacant properties we give regions like Western New York tools that make our neighborhoods stronger and safer and reinvigorate the local economy.”**

Under the bill, 15 smaller municipalities and 15 larger municipalities with a history of continued population loss since 1980 and widespread property vacancy would be eligible to apply to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for up to \$250,000 in assistance. Grantees could use the funding toward community efforts to address vacancy issues including: deconstruction and demolition, regional land bank establishment or expansion, the development of green infrastructure, or the adaptive reuse of historically, architecturally or culturally significant structures.

In addition to providing federal funds to cities and towns, the Community Regeneration, Sustainability and Innovation Act also creates a Federal Interagency Regeneration Communities Coordinating Council to offer technical assistance and support to the regions chosen for the pilot project.

The bill was written in consultation with prominent think tanks including the Northeast-Midwest Institute, SmartGrowth America, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), and the Center for Community Progress, as well as local neighborhood associations in cities across the country.